

Kanagers:The Conflict part eight

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Summary: Part eight; they fight. Marco gets an acquaintance in the middle of the night and Jake is having in trouble controlling the group...

Kanagers:The Conflict part eight

> <meta name="GENERATOR"> NOTE

_NOTE:the language used is true, it _does_ exist. I didn't make it up..._

[PART EIGHT] I SUGGEST READING THE FIRST PARTS

THE CONFLICT

##

CHAPTER FORTY-NINE

Devils

We circled, and squared up for a fight.

I felt aggravated, too bad on Rachel, she doesn't know what I just did. I just finished off a meal. I killed and I ate, unfortunately, the Hyenas decided to make my life uncomfortable. Before I had time to fill my stomach I was forced away. Away from _my_ kill.

Was I mad? Very.

And this stupid idiot was provoking me, challenging me. No one challenges me and gets away from it.

I let loose of a growl and charged at her. This little action surprised her. She thought I was going to lash out, and had prepared herself to block my blow. She was not expecting me to practically throw myself at her.

Within minutes we were a tangle on the ground. Both clawing at each other madly; I had more practice in clawing at someone than Rachel, naturally, I was winning.

She struggled up on her feet and I rolled over. We were circling again. Both of us bleeding. I was waiting for a chance to sink my teeth in the fleshy part of her arm. I was practically steaming from the thought; _just wait till I sink my teeth in your arm_â€|_ just you wait_â€|

I made a hastily dash at her. She kicked at me and her foot bashed my jaw. My head snapped back and I stumbled back, fury and rage screaming at me.

I made a second attempt in attacking her. I was tired, I just realized how much effort the hunt had drained out of me. But I was not going to back off, and by the looks of it, nor was Rachel.

A sudden very sharp pain snapped me back to reality. It the pain was came from my leg. What theâ€|? Damn! A snake bit me! I can't believe it! I felt Rachel's feet knock me off my legs and she sat on top of me; strangling death out of me! Luckily, I had seen that the snake was not venomous. As for Rachel.

In my fading vision, I gathered enough strength to shove her off me. I succeeded. As she fell off me, I grabbed her arm and sank my teeth in, hard, as hard as I could. She made me mad, and I wanted to take a big 'bite' out of her.

She screamed bloody murder.

I felt hands try to separate me from her. Hands try to pry off Rachel's hands from my neck. Hands that tried to dislodge me from biting her flesh. The harder she squeezed on my neck, the harder I bit down.

My hands went up and grabbed Rachel's fingers; I pried them off alone and dislodged my teeth. I snapped up from the ground. Rachel was on the ground gasping, trying to stop screaming. Her eyes wide open in astonishment. I could see that I had done damage to her arm she was bleeding pretty badly.

Her hair was a mess.

I was in a bad state.

"What are you trying to do?" Jake yelled at us.

"Aside from murdering each other." Marco cut in,

Rachel glared at him and the smirk on his face vanishedâ€| as far as I could tell.

Cassie rushed over to help Rachel but I stood in front of her, blocking her off.

She looked hesitantly at me then said, "Look, I want to help my friend."

I shook my head and crossed my arms.

"Devils," Jake said in disgust, "Back off."

I walked over to him and stuck my face about an inch away from his
"Make me!"

"Whoa! You are serious?" Marco said, looking worried, "Hey! Rachelâ€¦
You're bleeding!"

"What?" Tobias said, "What happened."

He just came out, with the rest with him.

"Oh man!" Max groaned, when he got a good look of my face.

"What is wrong with you?!" Julian screamed at me, "Ever since you
came, you'd been acting weird-"

"You call that weird?" Marco muttered, Rachel had gotten up and was
glaring me.

"So? That's none of your concern." I replied, like I didn't care.

I was lying, I did. See, my body still is not addicted to the drug,
but I was craving for it. My weapon against that were two thingsâ€¦
Showing that I didn't careâ€¦ orâ€¦ brutal violenceâ€¦ like what I
did to that poor hare I caught, I toyed with it before killing
it.

Then Rachel cameâ€¦ and I just exploded, I felt that she knew about
me, my weakness. I never had a weakness! And know, this strong nut
was starting to take my place, in my imagination I could seeâ€¦ But
she wasn't taking my place, that wasn't true. She just reminded me of
the old me, before I was caught, before the Yeerks had me. Until now,
I never realized that I hated me.

But I'll get better, I know that, but the problem is, that it is not
happening fast enough.

"So? So? What do you mean so?" Julian said, looking closely at me.
Not that he could see anything in this night, or the rain.

"Do you speak English?" I snapped at him, "I said, none of your
flipping-business."

Do you humans have anything else to do than fight. Dagmar
demanded.

That's all I needed, criticism from an alien, an arrogant
alien.

"Oh, so you are saying that Andalites don't do foolish things, huh?"
I asked her.

Not as stupid as fighting with ourselves! She cried out.

"Hey! Where did this entire human thing come in I didn't fight. That
was Devils and Rachel!" Marco commented.

"So you're saying that unleashing a plague at a galaxy isn't stupid. Is that so?" I was daring her to say no. And she sensed this, she sensed that I wanted to hear an excuse. Because when she does give me an excuse, I'll show her how 'stupid' it sounds!

She muttered something and turned away.

"And you," I snapped at Rachel, "Don't try that stunt again!"

She snorted at me and I turned running into the depth of the undergrowth, I heard Julian call, "Where do you find you next?"

"Kanagers base," I replied.

CHAPTER FIFTY

Jake

She was wild, I just noticed this part of her. But why? Why did she fight with Rachel, or, why did Rachel fight with her?

I intended to find that out, the situation stunk. Rachel mad? I shuddered. Rachel scares me sometimes. She proved that she had lines she ever would cross, but I was still scared of her bloodthirstiness for battle. I approached Rachel wearily.

"So?" I asked her, "You're going to tell me what all of that was about?"

No one was around, I had waited for Cassie to leave her. She had made a big fuss over her bitten arm. Then I had to wait for Tobias. Know was my only chance.

"Nothing much." I raised an eyebrow at her.

"Oh, okay." She gave up, or at least, I think she did, "There were some things sheâ€¦| irritated me with, mostly her attitude."

"Rachel," I complained, "That's not your job."

"I know, I know! Only you should have seen the way se stared at-" She stopped suddenly and flushed.

Oh god, I thought. Which war are we fighting anyway?

I chuckled, at least Rachel was acting normal. No such thing can be said abot me.

"Just don't go around doing anything _that_ drastic." I told her.

"Why don't you tell her tha-" She stopped talking when she caught the look on my face.

I turned away and found Julian sitting on some nearby rocks. He was toying round with a twig.

"Julian?" I said.

He looked up, for a moment; I saw this annoyed look on his face. When he saw it was me he smiled.

"What she did was it normal?" I asked him, something about the way he screamed at his former 'leader' made me uneasy.

"What she did?" He seemed to have no trouble in answering, "Yeah, it was pretty normal. I'd have worried if she didn't pick a fight with one of you guys. But what wasn't normal was her attitude. Devils never really was indifferent. She was either silence or intensified attention. But thisâ€¦"

He grabbed at the air, "I just don't understand."

I wasn't very surprised, "Julian? You seemed surprised when you first saw her, why was that?"

"Devilsâ€¦" He looked up, "Something happened to her when she was with the Yeerks, Jake don't forget that, she was with the Yeerks for two years, and we still didn't ask her if she loosened up and told us something about us."

"Two years is a long time." I answered.

"Even longer with the Yeerks." He sighed, "She used to be so strong, physically. I noticed that she got tired quickly. Or at least, faster than she usually does."

"You're worried about her. That's what making you sad." Being round Cassie helps a little.

"That's not all Jake." He muttered looking at the ground. "Something else changed inside her, she's too cold. Colder than she used to be."

CHAPTER FIFTY-ONE

Devils

Didn't take me a long time to find the base. It was -after all- my home. I walked away from that part and into the Bustain. White fang greeted me with a welcoming growl. He was a wolf, and wolves rarely bark. He rushed to meet me. He was not as enthusiastic as Astrok, a big German shepherd. He is a dog and he ran the moment he saw me.

"Hi there boys!" I cried, "Missed me?"

I played wrestle with a few canines and the got up. The animals, sensing my lost of interest in the game backed off, all except Joker, a little terrier that never gave up.

Then he too, got bored and grew interest with the little game of chase the animals were playing. I watched them for a while then gave a sharp whistle. They all stopped and stood at attention.

"Arjaa" I ordered. Using my native tongue. I just told them to back off, this also mean go into your pens and stand in it. I then would go and lock the pens.

As trained, all of them rushed to there varies dog-houses (a mixture between a dog house and an open space of about a three and a half meters by five.)

I walked and called all the animals into their homes, the ones built by my family and me. I walked passed the Crocodiles pen. These Crocodiles didn't come out, since their pen had a wildlife swamp inside it; they saw no need

to move.

Can I point out a fact? I can't control the Crocs or Gators around here. You can just forget about those. There is no such thing as taming a croc. These guys are wild, period.

I walked passed the Zebra stalls and to the horses. I opened the stalls one by one. Giving the animals the freedom to run.

I mounted bare backed on Black Jade, my horse; he was one of the fastest around. Kawee was the strongest stallion around. He was huge and white; his tail and mane where a light yellow. Blonde horse, that's what I used to call the horses colored like that.

It felt good to feel the power of the horse beneath me. Hear his strong breath; experience the strong steady, light gallop of his hooves. Sense his pride and horse loyalty. Horses are loyal creatures and considered to be creatures of pride. Before the cars and the dogs. Horses were the sign of wealth.

He was having a good time; he was running, and since he sensed no fear from me, he had no reason to fear at all.

Horses are weird animals, if you ride a horse while you are scared of it, it's just throw you off. If you were determent; it'll allow you to ride.

I loved cats and I loved horses. But these two wonderful animals were not my favorite. My favorites are Whales; Dolphins, Orcas, Blue Whales, Pilot whales. Sharks are cool as well, I admire them.

The sea and ocean has a charming influence on me. Whenever I'm near those two, I feel calm and happy. That's were I would be going, later perhaps. It had been a long time since I saw the local whales, or fish around here.

After making sure that all the animals were well-fed and had took a stretch around the open lands. I put them back in and let Jundi out, Jundi , in my native language, means soldier. Jundi is a Jaguar, he loves to guard things. And his favorite hobby is to lead people in and out of my home, the Palace. Presently known as the Kanagers base. Or just base.

I went in my home and relaxed a little. I sprawled out on a chair and closed my eyes. The chair was a cross between a sofa and an ordinary chair and a bed. There was a place you could lean your back on, and the rest extended out like a bed, it was almost like a divan. I sensed that Jaguar had hopped up and sat on the round chair that was usually near the entrance of the Palace. The round sofa/couch was soft and Jundi loves to hack his claws or teeth into it. It became a

habit.

I got up and closed all curtains. It was dark outside. I lit candles and I changed my clothes, I was in my room of course. I greeted Siberia, a white Bengal Tiger. I've known her since I was a child. She's about eight tiger years old, the equivalent of a human being thirty/forty something.

I lied down on the bed; it was a ground level bed. Siberia sprawled against me. I started thinking about the fight between me and Rachel. I realized how easily it would have been for her to win me. I shouldn't have pushed it. I knew I was tired, so why did I fight?

I wanted to prove something, to me. What was it? I had no idea. I sighed and pushed away the thoughts. I walked out of my room and went down to the first floor. And sat on the chair I previously sat on. Jundi had not bulged from his position on the round couch.

I let my mind wander here and there, aimless thoughts, and I drowsed off at one point. Jundi's movements woke me up. He leapt off silently and quickly strolled to the entrance. I could hear voices. I tensed up for a moment. Then remembered that the rest were coming. I laid back and continued my sleeping; ignoring the fact that I was not in my room. Hey! It was my home, why should I bother myself with where I should or _shouldn't_ sleep?

I could hear a commotion of voices and Jundi's growls and these growls turned to snaps and snarls. I heard my friend's voices rise in surprise, then to fear. I could hear the canines- the ones on the loose- come running to the entrance; snarling and barking their heads off. What the hell?

Oh shit!

Julian forgot! He must have brought the Andalites with him!

I leapt off and bolted to the entrance. The animals! I trained them to attack _any_ unknown creature. Two Andalites, one male the other female clarified as unknown. I also targeted them to attack furiously at the presence of an Andalite! You know, Visser Three, he has an Andalite body.

I slowed down as I reached the main doors. And calmly walked the rest of the way, as if I was in no hurry.

"Hey guys, what are you doing here?" I asked, making myself sound annoyed. Despite the fact that I told them to come, and the fact that Ax and Dagmar were trying to avoid being bitten off by the animals.

"Can't you stop them?" Julian screamed, in order to be heard over the racket.

"Can I?" I taunted.

"Devils!" He screamed, "That's no time for-"

"_Tarajaa!_" I roared at the top of my lungs, this surprised them all, animals and sentient beings. Usually, I always talk, I never scream or yell, even when I'm mad. It is very rare that I yell. With

good reason, I lived half my life in the wild, to be heard, you need a very loud voice. You don't want to stand near me when I yell. Bides, I don't do it because it gives them a head-ache, my friends.

But that wasn't true, the animals were not surprised that I yelled. To them, that was something normal, what was not normal and out of the routine was me telling them to retreat when they were attacking an alien life form.

They stood there, all hesitant and confused. A large dog, Basiwell, started whimpering. Despite her over grown size, she was the gentlest and friendliest, not so was known in battle. But I never really trusted Basiwell in fights; she had a tendency of 'letting off' other, smaller weaker animals. But she was a great friend and baby sitter; she has the patience of a mother. In fact, Basiwell was always keen on adopting small cat cubs or wolf cubs. She raised two cheetahs cubs once, something rare but not unusual.

"_Arjaa, Rooh_" _I continued, telling them to go off. Back to their various guard posts.

"Come," I beckoned to the two Andalites. They and the rest of the group followed curious.

"What was all that about?" Julian said angrily. Once they were a safe distance away. "You know what Devils? I think you were taking it a bit too far-

"You forgot," I said, nerves as cool as the night air itself, sure I was churning inside, but I never showed that to anyone. It was a habit I built up. Lock your emotions. But Julian, Max, Guttani and Salix already now that I was mad, this is nothing they learnt by experience. By being with me for sometime they would learn when I was mad, even though I never showed it.

It is important not to get your anger carry you away, if you ever hunt in droughts, which is often, you need patience and nerves of steel. Because there you would be, hot, thirsty mad and scared of the death you might be facing; you spot food, run after it and never get it, so you burn off precious energy, and never get what you wantâ€¦ it'sâ€¦| frustrating.

"Forgot what?!" Rachel yelled at me, unnerved by my attitude, I suppose she took it personal when one of her friends were about to be chopped to pieces.

She expected me to yell back, she wanted another o at me. If we fought now, I know I'm going to win, but since she wanted me to yell, I wasn't going to, let her nerves burn.

"Julian," I repeated, "The animals."

I never had to say more than two words to get what I meant across to anyone, but today, Julian sees to have difficulty on concentrating. Either that, or he had grown stupid.

"What about the freaking-animals?" he spat.

I raised an eyebrow at him. "You gone stupid?"

"The animals? What about the freaking animals Devils make sense will you, I mean puleez what the hell-" He blushed madly, "Oh."

Didn't smile or leer, I never do that. I suppose that's why the Kanagers respected me for a long time. When one of them fails to do what I expect from them I don't reprimand them, or humiliate them.

Instead I grew serious.

"What happened a few minutes ago could have grown disastrous, don't pull off another stunt like that again." I said neutrally.

"Oh, man. I must have looked stupid." He groaned.

"Must have? You blew it my friend." Max said with a laugh. They were relaxing, I saw that, for the first time since we meat I had acted 'normal' and something 'normal' happened.

"What? What happened?" Marco asked.

"Devils trained the animals around here to attack alien life forms. Julian was supposed to have stopped us a couple hundred feet away from the Palace and the Bustan. Then send one of us to call her. I assume she wanted to introduce, the animals to us. So that they see you guys as friends, not as a threat or danger." Salix said.

"Then why didn't you remind him?" Jake said.

She blushed, "Guess we all forgot about them," She admitted.

"So what are we suppose to do? Go in their and chat with the animals?" Marco said unbelievably.

"Not really." I replied.

"But you're going to have to do something very, very dramatic." Guttani grinned, "I'm glad I'm over with that!"

"What?" Marco said worriedly.

"Marco, your such a baby," Rachel said, "What could we possibly do that's that dangerous?"

Well, Rachel, I thought, you're in for a surprise.

** **

**CHAPTER FIFTY-TWO **

Rachel

"What!?" Marco shirked, "No way!"

Devils was standing in one of the pens. A lion was sitting beside her. It was looking at us like we were food.

Dagmar and Ax had to morph human, Devils said that she'd do introduce the animals with them later. She said that that part could be

dangerous. At the mean time, Dagmar and Ax said that they wanted to watch what we were going to do.

Marco was supposed to go first. I dared him, well, before we knew what we were going to be doing. Devils had just told Marco to stand near the lion and allow it to knock him to the ground.

"Look," she explained patiently, "He wouldn't bite you or anything."

"Look how big that thing is!"

"You thing I'm lying to you?" she said, looking at Marco.

"Yeah, for ninety-nine percent of the words you just said."

"You baby." I said, going forward.

Marco retreated back. I walked into the pen and stopped dead in my tracks. Suddenly, I didn't want to come any closer. He was 'big' and I know what kind of damage a cat can do. He stared at me, I looked away.

"Rachel, NO, keep eye contact with him," she instructed. "Look him right in the eye, show him that you aren't afraid."

I did as instructed.

"Okay, now walk slowly towards him." She said.

I did.

"Reach out and touch his forehead." I reached out with a trembling hand, my hand was very close to his head when he opened his mouth and snarled, he growled as well. I quickly backed off. The lion stood up and advanced, baring his teeth.

"Rachel!" Tobias cried.

Devils stood behind me.

"_Habeeb, Kalleek._" She said, I had no idea what it meant.

The lion stopped advancing.

"Reach out for him," Devils urged.

At that moment, Devils didn't seem so bad. She was happy, I could feel that. She was excited that I was going to be a friend with that lion. It seemed like she was introducing the lion to me. I was the outsider of her family, while this cautious lion was a part of her family. I realized this very suddenly, and I pitied her. Julian said that she has no family, or at least she used to have. What would I feel if I lost my family? And then there was this lion that shared his feeling with the human female standing beside me. That was something special. I don't think that kind of friendship would have just come very quickly.

I think I'd be cautious too; the lion was slightly alarmed at my presence. I was something new to him, it was not every day that

Devils was going to introduce a human friend to him. I think he too was happy, in a way he was.

I was going to realize that all the animals around loved Devils. I suppose that this was the strange side of her. Cold with people but friendly with these oversized giants.

The lion was all over me! He was licking me! He jumped back and playfully leapt at Devils, Devils grinned and wrestled with the lion. We stood, astounded. For there, in front of us, every single law of nature was being defied. A tiger and two pumas ran along and joined the play; within minutes all of us, Humans, Aliens in morph and animals were playing! It was a special feeling. The lion in front of me wasn't hurting me he was having fun. And what was rewarding, was that I too was having a chance to forget about the Yeerks and play around.

Cassie was the happiest; she was thrilled, I was happy for her too. For the first time in months, we, the Aimorphs were having fun. And for this first time the Kanagers and the Animorphs united. With the help of the forces of nature, we will finish our mission: destroy the Yeerks.

CHAPTER FIFTY-THREE

Marco

"Yhaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!"

It was cool, hanging around in Africa; all of it is cool except for the insect part. Uhuh, that's where the manger is suppose to write the letters 'bugs' in big block capital letters, colored neon red. I mean, excuse me, in all the documentaries I've seen "which are not many- they never mentioned the part about Africa having an overwhelming population of insects.

And spiders, don't forget those as well. Snakes as well, lots and lots of snakes, ugh!

Now I have something new to add on my list of annoying personals; 'creepy crawlers' this section would be underlined.

"What the? What? What is it?" Marco...?" Jake said groggily.

"The? The, The, the what ever! Jake get it off me!" I screeched.

I just woke up to find this HUMONGUS beast onto of me. It was some kind of snake. A snake, on top of me!

And that was Jake all groggy I just woke him up.

"Hey buddy, do your duty," I whispered to Jake, staring at the reptile, "Save your little pal, I know, I'm annoying but please give me a chance, I mean, I swear I will not annoy yo-"

"Marco," Jake said sounding annoyed. "Why did you wake me up?"

The snake was coming closer and closer to my face. It's snake tongue slithered in and out of "H.e.l.p me." I whimpered.

"Marco? What is wrong with- Oh man!" He yelled, he jerked upright and leapt off the ground, "Jeez Marco what are you trying to do?!"

"Quietlyâ€| Quite-elyâ€|" The snake came closer to me, "Help!"

"I'll go get Cassie!" He said, turned around and started to run out of the door.

"Hey!" I complained, "You're goanna just leave me!!"

The snake slithered up to me and I very slowly sat upright and started to slide up the wall. The snake's tail went around my left ankle and it started to climb up me.

Tobias woke up, "Hey, Marco what are you doing?" He frowned, "Why are you standing like that? Where is Jake?"

"Snake on me." I murmured, feeling faint.

At that moment, when the snake's head was three inches away from my nose, my friends start to show up.

"Oh, no," I said softly.

Cassie, Jake, Rachel, Ax and Max came in.

"Whoa!" Rachel laughed, "What did you do?"

"Rachel." I hissed, "Not. Funny."

I was staring directly into the reptile's eyes, and likewise, it was staring in mine. I felt like bait, and I was.

"That's a snake! Marco don't move!" Max yelled.

"I figured all that out." I whispered, "Just get it off me!"

"I can't do that," Max said, looking worried, "The minute I touch it is the minute it'll strike!"

"So Marco is going to get bitten?" Rachel grinned and sat down, "Cool, anybody, Popcorn? Coke?"

"Rachel," Max snapped, "It's venomous!"

I almost fainted, know I really, really didn't want it to bite me.

Rachel got up and looked serious, "Huh? Then what are we going to do?"

"What for it to get off Marco?" Cassie suggested.

"Cassie!" I whispered urgently, "I thought you'd know what to do! The rest are hopeless!"

"No Marco, I don't know what to do and how to do it." She replied, "Try not talking, you're just drawing the snake's attention."

"That's going to be hard for Marco, 'stop talking'" Rachel joked.

This must have been heaven for Rachel, annoying me when I had no time for a clever answer. Besides, I'm history!

What about Devils, Ax suggested, She handles reptilians, I saw her do that.

"Yeah!" Jake said enthusiastically, "Call her."

"Can't." Max muttered.

"What do you mean you can't? I'm-" I started to complain when the snake rapped itself around me. I looked at my friends my eyes frozen in shock.

"Devils would be out now, hunting." Came the reply.

They all turned around, it was Julian. "What's wrong?"

They didn't need to explain.

"Look I'll see if I can find her but doubt me find her" Julian said. He turned around and ran outside.

And slammed head first into Devils.

"Oooofff!"

They fell to the ground in a heap. Devils got up throwing Julian off her.

"Why are you making a racket?" Dagmar came in behind Devils, "We could hear you from outside."

They turned around and pointed at me. All of them.

Jake sighed.

"Guysâ€|.helpâ€|." I moaned. The snake was so close to me that I felt it's tongue on my skin, it's snout was on my cheek. I took in shaky breaths.

"Okay." Devils said, "Cassie, I'll need your help. Rachel you too."

"Where did all the men go?" Max said suspiciously.

"Flushed down the toilet." Rachel replied, looking at me. "You're lucky I'm saving your sorry butt."

"I'm going to grab him by the head and fling him to the ground. Rachel get ready incase Marco gets bitten, I'll need you to cut the circulation; we don't want the poison to spread." The snake had descended down to my thigh.

"We don't?" Rachel wondered.

"Hey, don't kill me in the process!" I protested I knew Rachel. She'd just love to get a pinch out of me.

"Cassie?" Devils said, looking at the snake, "Go find Jundi, when you find him say to him_ 'thooaaban_' He'll bring you a sac and will follow you here." She looked up at Cassie,

"Got it!" She turned around and left the room, repeating the word '_thooaaban_' to herself.

"Okay Marco," She instructed, "Stay still and when I reach out for the snake don't breath, or keep your breathing steady."

Don't breath? I already wasn't breathing. My heart was pounding. I bet that Devils was close enough to _hear_ my pounding heart!

She pressed herself close to me and posed; her hand four inches away from the snakes head. Jundi and Cassie came in.

In Cassie's hand was a sac, it was like a fishing net only longer. It was also made out of white strong fabric. She opened it. It looked like Cassie was finally doing something that was familiar.

Devils closed her eyes for a few seconds. Opened them and said softly "_Jundi, emsic._ Keep."

Then in a burst of energy she grabbed the snake's head and threw him away!

He fell to the ground with a thud. Jundi ran to him; snapping and snarling.

TTTTTIIHHSSSSSSHHH!

The snake commented angrily. I collapsed to the floor.

Devils ran over to Jundi and grabbed the thrashing snake by the head. Cassie went up to her and Devils slowly lowered the snake inside. Cassie twisted the top so that the snake could not escape. Then she knelt down to the panting Jundi and whispered a praise in his ears. The jaguar looked as if he was smiling. He turned and ran outside.

"Thanks Cassie," She said, "You too Rachel."

"I don't get a chance to strangle Marco?" She asked, disappointed.

"Next time Rachel." I told her, "You'll get your chance."

"I'll go pop him in one of the cages!" She frowned, "Something's not quite right!" she muttered to herself.

I sat down on the ground-level bed (I found out that all beds around here are like that, it makes you wonder; why on earth make it ground level when there are snakes around?)

"What," Jake said, looking shocked, "You're just going to sleep?"

"A man needs his beauty sleep." I replied, ignoring the comments and

remarks.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

Cassie

"Something about the snake is wrong" Devils spoke to me. We were in one of the rooms where she keeps the injured animals. She had the snake in a specially designed cage. It was deep and had a heavy wire mesh around it.

Devils was working hard in working out something, I couldn't go back to sleep so I went out and joined her. Salix and Guttani had slept through the whole thing and Rachel didn't bother them.

Devils had told us that even though in the palace, there was enough room for every one of us to take five rooms; it would be a lot safer to sleep in threes. As we saw with Marco; that was an excellent reason to why we should sleep in pairs.

"Look," She continued, "At the markings, at it's under side."

"Yeah." I said slowly, not getting the picture.

"They are exactly perfect for a non-venomous snake. That's how their underside looks like, same basic pattern. But, this snake has poison sacs. Why? I saw this kind of snake once before in my life. But I dismissed it as a mutant, a miss birth. Know, I really wonder."

"What does it mean?" I wondered.

"I don't know," she said, "I milked him a few hours earlier. And then I tested his venom. It is defiantly stronger than that found in the king Cobra. But the toxin acts slightly slower than the king Cobra's toxin."

"And there is another thing I discovered." She said with a weary sigh.

"What?" I asked her.

"This snake gives no warning whatsoever, I mean, if you're in it's way it's going to take you down. It attacks insanely fast. I am surprised Marco didn't get bitten."

"What?" I demanded, "So not only does this snake give no warning, it attacks without real reason?"

"Not really, I wouldn't put it this way." She said, staring at the big snake.

"Then how would you put it?"

"It's finds it important to defend it self. It's not an attack. But," she said hesitantly, "It attacks whatever it finds threatening. I don't know what the snake found threatening about Marco."

"Maybe his hair cut," Rachel joked, coming in, "Or his bad sense of

humor, bad jokes." She said with a shudder.

Devils cast a glance at Rachel then continued studying the snake, ignoring Rachel's wisecrack.

"It impossible!" Devils cried, "Nah! No way!"

"What" Rachel demanded.

"What is it?" I said in alarm.

"Wait a sec!" She bolted out of the room leaving Rachel and me looking at each other n puzzlement. Devils rushed back in with a thick solid branch in her hand.

She opened the snake's cage and poked the branch in, still holding it. The snake slithered up the branch andâ€| wrapped itself around it.

"What's so impressive about that?" Rachel said in puzzlement, "It's a snake, all snakes climb trees, what's the big deal?"

"Cassie look." Devils said simply.

And I immediately understood. "Hey! That's not a Python! But it's wrapping it's body around the branch in a Python like way!"

"So?" Rachel said, unsure.

"Venomous snakes tend to live at ground level and nest in burrows under the ground. Venomous snakes _don't_ need strong muscles for wrapping themselves around a branch orâ€| squeezing its prey to death. The poison is more then enough."

Rachel stared at me, "That's bad news?"

"No, it's unusual, I want to know why a Python mated with a Cobra, or a Viper. I have to figure out what this guy is. Because he is certainly not a normal snake." Devils answered for me.

"What does that have to do with us? Why should we care? Why is it our problem that there is an unclassified animal running on the loose, Guys we got _unclassified_ sentient beings running around!" Rachel exploded.

"Unclassified?" Cassie said, "Uhuh, the terror has a name."

"We happen to live on this unclassified snake's land," Devils sad, heatedly, "Doesn't that mean anything to you? And besides, I think it has something to do with _them,_ they have been way too quite lately."

"Oh." Rachel commented, "I guess you could be right."

We all looked at each other then at the snake, _what secrets could you be hiding?_ I asked silently.

CHAPTER FIFTY-FIVE

Jake

_ _Devils had told us of her suspicions. All of us were able to attend the meeting aside from Julian, Guttani, Salix and Max. They had to go back home before they got busted. Which; they already were.

- -

"You found a what?" I asked Ax,

A Z-Space transponder. It was hacked into the reptile's tail.

"This definitely has something to do with the Yeerks!" Marco yelped.

"What does this prove?" I wondered, looking at my friends.

"That we've been sleeping on ourselves and the Yeerks have been working?" Rachel said.

I looked at her and she shrugged.

Devils was silent, she was not deep in thought she wasâ€¦ listening, observing. Like we were stuffed animals in a glass case. It was a strange feeling.

Every time I talked to someone I'd get this feeling that someone was staring at me, you know, when you walk in a dark ally way and have this feeling that you were being followed? Watched? That's what I felt.

I only caught her once. It was Devils. She was the one who stared at me, I didn't know why.

And when my eyes met hers, she gaze right through me, her piercing golden eyes cut a direct beam into my eye and almost burned my brain. I quickly looked away.

I'll never understand her. But right now, I had more important things to worry about.

"We go and ask them?" Suggested Tobias

"What? 'we go to them and ask them'?" Marco asked skeptically. "Emm, hello, We're the Andalite bandits and we are wondering what on Earth are you doing creating new species and attaching Zed-Vacuum Transponders to their tails? Oh by the way, thanks for telling us and forget that we ever asked! Bye!"

Z-Space, Ax corrected.

"Oh well fine, _that_ wont be suspicious!" Marco said sarcastically.

"Bust them?" Rachel wondered.

"Back to plan one," Marco said hastily, "It seems less suicidal."

"Is that it?" I demanded, trying to get their attention, "Come' on guys, I expected better ideas."

"You got a magic answer?" Marco spread out his hands.

I nodded my head like I was going to say yes. "No, but I thought you guys would."

"Now what?" Cassie wondered.

"Now, where back to square one." Tobias muttered and Rachel glared at him.

"We're not beat."

"No Rachel, we are." Marco emphasized.

"Devils," I said, realizing her presence. "What do you think?"

She let out a long sigh and opened her eyes. She looked up at us.

"What?"

"Hey! Where you even listening to us?" Marco yelled.

"Jeez! We've been racking our brains out and all you did was nod off to sleep?! Are you really the leader here or the sidekick? Sometimes I-" Rachel exploded.

"Did you reach a conclusion?" Came the drawled out reply.

Rachel fumed and w all stared at each other.

No. Dagmar admitted.

"Good then, wake me up when you do." She snapped.

Devils' a good girl really, but for most of the time she gets on my nerves. Marco and Rachel felt the same too, I guess. They walked over to her. Marco made a 'before you' gesture to Rachel. She walked right up to her and knocked her off the banister she was leaning against.

Wommfff!

Devils fell.

Bonk!

As Devils grabbed Rachel's hair on impact. Pulling Rachel to the ground as well.

"OWww!" Rachel yelled, "You miserable-"

"YAAARowwwwwwww!" Jundi leapt up out of no-where and prepared to jump on Rachel.

"Whoa!" Rachel commented, "Nice kitty."

"Hey!" Things were getting slightly out of hand.

No one paid attention to me. It was total pandemonium! Devils jumping

and snarling; Jundi was no better. Rachel, Tobias and Marco were yelling at her and Cassie was trying to break the fight.

"Stop it!" I said.

"Hey get off me!"

"Stop that!"

"You're going to regret you ever-"

"Merooow!"

"Rachel! That was me!"

"Watch my hair!"

"Ow!"

"Stop it guys, look, can't we just sort this out and talk about-"

"Argh! He slashed me! I don't believe it!"

"Can't we just sort this out? I mean look- Yaha!"

"Maaerow!"

Again, no one paid attention.

I looked at Ax and Dagmar, a look of astonishment on my face. Ax shrugged and Dagmar stared.

"STOP!" I roared.

They all froze. Jundi snarled at us and disappeared. Rachel got off Devils and Devils kicked Rachel as she did. Rachel stumbled, growled, spun around to-

"You heard me!" I yelled, "Stop it!"

They all froze.

Devils got up disgustedly and traded dirty looks with Rachel.

"What do you call that kind of behavior?" I demanded, really pissed off, "Look at us!" I jeered.

"You would think that for a second we'd actually win the Yeerks! But this? This is unbelievable, how exactly are you guys going to behave in battles? Your going to stop fighting the Yeerks and turn against each other! STOP that Devils! You too Rachel. We're all okay except for you too! Now," I paused and glared at them.

"We are going to sort this thing between you two girls. Now." I motioned for them all to sit down.

"Someone, go call the rest of the group." I said.

Cassie got up and left.

We all sat, staring at ourselves in silence.

Ax and Dagmar got a little restless and started to fidget and stare at the entrance of the room, like they wanted out of here.

"Ax? Dagmar?" I told them. "I'm sorry but you have to stay as well, you're part of this little 'pathetic' army. Sorry for any inconvenience."

After twenty minutes, Cassie, Salix, Guttani, Max and Julian came in.

They got the picture and sat down. I suppose Cassie told them what happened.

"So, are we going to sort this out?" I asked.

Julian got up and looked at Devils "_What _is up with you." He came over and sat near me.

I think that you should understand how things are around here. Let me explain. I am leader, well sort of. Julian is a leader too. The rest of our group is satisfied with that. But Devils? She wasn't commanded by anyone, in a way Rachel was like that. But, she listens to me and respects me. Can't say the same about Devils.

See, Know this little army has too leader, problem, who commands when we fight? Who is going to be ruthless and in control? Not me, I am sick of life and death decisions. I have dealt with those for over three years. I feel the same about Julian as well. So, in the heat of battle; Devils would lead. If she were out of commission, it would be me, if Devils and I were out of commission then it would be Julianâ€¦

"Rachel, Devils. Spill," I said mechanically, "I am totally tired of this."

Rachel was eyeballing Devils. Devils was ignoring her. She looked straight ahead. Her skin pale; she looked tired and worn out. Under her eyes were black circles. She put her head in her palms.

"Nothing is wrong with me." She said in a muffled voice.

I glared at her, so did Julian. Then I looked at Rachel.

Rachel was looking uncertain. Looking at Devils then to us. Like she couldn't decide.

"Emm, nothing." She said, looking at the ground.

She was lying. It was something big. I was going to the bottom of this.

"Rachel, what is it." I said.

"You know something right?" Julian said sharply. "You know what's wrong with Devils, right?"

"No, DUH!" She snapped, "That's why I'm mad at her. She wouldn't

explain why she takes the damn-"

Rachel stooped abruptly and said nothing.

"Took what?" Julian snapped. Getting up.

The concentration was all on Rachel. What was she hiding.

"Hey, I'm not invisible." Devils growled.

"Devils, why didn't you tell themâ€|you look terrible." Rachel
muttered

looking sick to the stomach.

"You drive me craze, since I saw you-" She stopped again and looked
uneasily at Devils.

Devils' face was emotionless, she mouthed the words 'don't' silently.
Staring ahead.

_"She never told me why." Rachel said looking away from Devils who
had buried her head between her knees,

"She didn't tell me _why_ she takes
drugs."

What do you think?

End
file.